



Homeland
Security

1 August 2008

The Honorable Michael Chertoff
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

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2008 AUG 20 PM 5:37

Dear Mr. Secretary:

The Federal Interagency Committee on Emergency Medical Services (FICEMS) was created (42 U.S.C § 300d-4) by the Secretaries of Transportation, Health and Human Services and Homeland Security to, in part, *...ensure coordination among the Federal agencies involved with State, local, tribal or regional emergency medical services and 9-1-1 systems*. I was elected as the 2008 chair of FICEMS.

One of FICEMS' highest priorities is to assure effective medical oversight for every Emergency Medical Services (EMS) system, for both daily emergency medical services and for their response to catastrophic events. The FICEMS recognizes the importance of medical oversight in assuring the quality of EMS care, driving evidence-based practice guidelines, supporting EMS research and providing overall system medical accountability.

Recognizing the fundamental requirement of medical oversight to the operation of any EMS system and the need for a consistent, coordinated Federal approach, FICEMS believes that Federal funds should be used only in EMS systems operating under medical oversight.

At their last meeting, FICEMS unanimously adopted the following position:

It is the intent of FICEMS that all emergency medical services should be provided under medical direction. Federal funds may be used to support EMS activities in systems operating under medical direction consistent with local and state requirements and with the concurrence and approval of that medical direction entity. In those situations in which medical direction is not in place, funds may be used to assist in the establishment of a recognized medical direction program, consistent with the requirements of the specific grant program.

On behalf of FICEMS, I am requesting your assistance in endorsing this position and, as appropriate, disseminating it to any EMS-related programs within your Agency for inclusion in future grant guidance.

I would be pleased to respond to your questions, or you may have your staff call Drew Dawson at the National Highway Traffic Safety's Office of Emergency Medical Services which provides administrative support for FICEMS. Drew can be reached at 202 366-9966 or drew.dawson@dot.gov

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeff Runge', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jeffrey Runge, M.D.
Chair, FICEMS
Assistant Secretary Office of Health Affairs
Chief Medical Officer
Department of Homeland Security